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1909

January 13, 1909

“Thanks for All Things,” The Medical Missionary 18, 2.

EJW

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“Be not drunken with wine, wherein is riot, but be filled with the Spirit; ... giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” *Ephesians 5:18-20.MEDM January 13, 1909, page 39.1*

Most people, even professed Christians, would think this rather a hard matter. We are familiar with the exhortation, “In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you,” and are, able to adjust ourselves to it. Of course we can in everything give thanks that things are no worse than they are; for no one except Christ has drank of the dregs of the cup of suffering. We may have learned how, even in the deepest of afflictions and severest trials, to thank God for the promise of his presence and salvation; but to give thanks always for all things, is a lesson that is not usually learned until one has passed through many experiences of bitter trial.*MEDM January 13, 1909, page 39.2*

In the scripture just quoted there are two admonitions. One is, not to be drunken with wine; the other is to give thanks always for all things; and while the first seems the easier, the second is no less a Christian duty, or privilege. “All things” is a term admitting no exceptions. Passing by the comforts and easily recognised blessings which are commonly named as calling for thanksgiving, we have hardships, which are, equally with the others, included in the “all things” for which thanks is to be given to God. Loss of property, or poverty on account of inability to obtain employment, calls for thanksgiving to God. For that which is infinitely more crushing,-loss of friends,-we must give thanks. Are we misunderstood, maligned, even persecuted!-for this cause also we must thank God. Even for the bonds of “affliction and iron” and the

darkness and shadow of death that come down upon us as the result of our own folly and transgression, we are always to give thanks to God.*MEDM January 13, 1909, page 39.3*

How can we do it?-Only by knowing that “all things work together for good to them that love God.” It can not be done as a matter of duty, for thanksgiving must be as spontaneous as the songs of the birds. Real thanksgiving comes from a heart so full of a sense of gratitude that the most natural and the only thing to do is to express it.*MEDM January 13, 1909, page 40.1*

In order to thank God for trials and afflictions, we must know that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” What if we can trace our trouble to our own transgressions! Chastisement from a loving parent (and, “God is love”) is not a token of anger. And we must never forget that whoever or whatever may be the means of our affliction, it comes from God. If it is the means of teaching us obedience, is it not a valid reason for thanksgiving!*MEDM January 13, 1909, page 40.2*

Suppose we can not see any reason why we are afflicted? Job could not for a long time; but the end demonstrated “that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” Hezekiah had served God “in truth and with a perfect heart,” and yet when he was left to himself he revealed things in his heart of which he was ignorant; but God knew them. The same was the case with Job, and affliction was necessary to make him know himself so as to abhor himself, and to know God as he could not know him in the time of unbroken prosperity. “Tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed”-does not disappoint us, and therefore we can “glory in tribulations also.”*MEDM January 13, 1909, page 40.3*

It may seem to us that the tribulations are altogether out of proportion to that which was lacking. For instance, Job was already “perfect and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil,”-why should he need to suffer so much? Simply because the lesson could not be learned with less. When John Wesley was a child, his father said to his mother, “Why do you tell that boy the same thing twenty times?” And the answer was, “Because nineteen times isn’t

sufficient for him to remember it.” God desires that we should be “perfect and entire, wanting in nothing,” and when we know that only “divers temptations” can accomplish this result, we shall count them “all joy,” and give thanks for every one that brings us into closer communication with our loving Father.*MEDM January 13, 1909, page 40.4*

Afflictions are necessary to fit us for service. “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort; who comforteth us in all our tribulation [even though our transgressions have brought them upon us], that we may be able to comfort them which are in trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.” Unthankfulness is that which transformed men who once knew God into heathen (*Romans 1:21-23*), and thankfulness for all things the recognition of God in all things, -will change a heathen into a Christian. How essential, then, that they whose lifework is to make known “the God of all comfort” to the heathen should have learned this lesson, in which one never can be proficient without undergoing suffering. And how foolish to complain or to be discouraged over that which in God’s hands can work nothing but good.*MEDM January 13, 1909, page 40.5*

“Then welcome each rebuff
That turns earth’s smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand, but go.”*MEDM January 13, 1909, page 40.6*

January 27, 1909

“Comfort from Adversity,” The Medical Missionary 18, 4.

EJW

E. J. Waggoner

“Surely the wrath of man shall praise Thee; the remainder of wrath shalt Thou restrain.” *Psalm 76:10.MEDM January 27, 1909, page 77.1*

These words have doubtless given comfort to many Christians in times of persecution. They remind us that God rules even among wicked men, saying to them, as he does to the raging sea, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further; and here shall the proud waves be stayed.” They show believers that even though the heathen may rage against them, they can still give thanks always for all things.*MEDM January 27, 1909, page 77.2*

A little analysis of the text, however, will make it possible for us to read it more understandingly, and so to receive from it more spiritual consolation. The thoughtful reader can not fail to have been struck by the statement concerning the “remainder of wrath.” The words would seem to imply that God will “restrain” the wrath that remains beyond what he is able to make to praise Him. Then the question arises: Why does he not make all the wrath of man to praise him? This, indeed, is what is implied in the first clause of the verse, for there is no qualification. Since all things, without limitation, are possible with God, it is certain that this “remainder of warth” can not be that which it is beyond his power to make praise him. If he has power to “restrain” it, that in itself is to get praise from it.*MEDM January 27, 1909, page 77.3*

A clearer idea is suggested by the reading of the Revision: “The residue of wrath shalt Thou gird upon Thee.” This is the exact meaning of the Hebrew like *gar-*“to bind around, to gird upon oneself, as clothing, or a sword.” From the fact that the personal pronoun does not appear in the Hebrew text, the translators of the old version probably thought that the verb meant here merely to

hold back; but there can be no doubt that it means to *gird upon*, as in every other instances of its occurrences, and the pronoun is naturally implied. *MEDM January 27, 1909, page 77.4*

Now a word about the “remainder.” That which is left of anything obviously includes all that there is of it, and so we way and should read the text as it is in the Norwegian: “The wrath of man prepares Thy praise; with the utmost limit of wrath Thou girdest Thyself about.” The scholarly version of M. Segond has *MEDM January 27, 1909, page 77.5*

L’homme te célèbre même dans sa fureur,
Quand tu te revêts de tout ton courroux, *MEDM January 27, 1909, page 77.6*

“Man praises Thee even in his fury, when Thou clothest Thyself with all his rage.” *MEDM January 27, 1909, page 77.7*

Now we see that we have here a much stronger statement than that in the second psalm, that God laughs at the raging of the heathen. Yes, he takes the utmost limit of seemingly unbounded human wrath and binds it upon himself as a garment, making it minister to his pleasure. *MEDM January 27, 1909, page 77.8*

A striking illustration of this truth is found in the case of Joseph and his brethren. The brothers, “moved with envy,” sold Joseph into Egypt, intending that to be a substitute for death as a means of putting an end to him, but it was in reality the means of advancing him to royal honor and power, and of making him the saviour of the world. So Joseph said to his brethren: “Ye meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” With a still stronger statement, the psalmist leaves the wicked brothers and their wrath altogether out of the question, saying that God “sent a man before them, even Joseph, who was sold for a servant.” *MEDM January 27, 1909, page 77.9*

Still more forcibly is the truth of our text illustrated in that which embraces all Christian experience in connection with Satanic rage. The high priest counseled the death of Christ, in order to put an end to his influence, and thereby was an instrument in making the “good tidings of great joy” effective to “all people.” Thus in the prayer of

the Spirit-filled disciples: "For of a truth against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together for to do whatsoever Thy hand and Thy counsel determined before to be done." They didn't mean it so, but all the rage of men against Jesus was simply a means of working out God's purpose for the salvation of the world.*MEDM January 27, 1909, page 78.1*

And so it must ever be. It becomes us, therefore, ever to keep alive such living faith that instead of being dismayed or discouraged by any sort of adversity, we may give thanks for it, knowing that it is working God's praise, and so our salvation. It matters not that we can not see how any good can come of it; we may then rejoice the more, because God is preparing for us a great surprise.*MEDM January 27, 1909, page 78.2*

The text gives us another thought that should always be kept in mind as a support to the weakest of us: Since God makes the wrath of man to praise him, using their utmost fury as a garment of praise, how much more will he not glorify himself by the feeble, often erring, yet sincere, and loyal, service of those who love him.*MEDM January 27, 1909, page 78.3*

February 3, 1909

“God’s Case in Court,” *The Medical Missionary* 18, 5.

EJW

E. J. Waggoner

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” *Isaiah 1:18*.MEDM February 3, 1909, page 89.1

The love of God “passeth knowledge.” The peace of God, that comes from believing, “passeth all understanding.” How then is it possible for men to reason out a thing which transcends human reason, and which can be known only by revelation? The “Spirit of wisdom and revelation” in the knowledge of God casts down reasonings (2 *Corinthians 10:5*, margin) and brings into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ, so that the wisest philosopher is constrained to receive the kingdom of heaven as the little child in whom the reasoning faculty is not developed.MEDM February 3, 1909, page 89.2

Where is reasoning then? An outline picture from a few texts of Scripture will enable us to derive more comfort than ever before from the oft-quoted exhortation and promise in *Isaiah 1:18*.MEDM February 3, 1909, page 89.3

First compare *Psalms 51:4* and *Romans 3:4*. The latter is a repetition of the former, with a verbal change that does not change the meaning, but gives us a larger view of it. For brevity’s sake we cite only the clause that is compared.MEDM February 3, 1909, page 89.4

“That Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest.” *Psalms 51:4*.MEDM February 3, 1909, page 89.5

“That Thou mightest be justified in Thy sayings, and mightest overcome when Thou art judged.” *Romans 3:4*.MEDM February 3,

From the foregoing we learn that when God judges He Himself is judged. God has been fully slandered by Satan. He has been charged with selfish indifference to the wants of His creatures, and many have believed and repeated the accusation. The case, therefore, has been brought into court, God is now on trial, and the final judgment of the world will be the announcement of the verdict in His case, when every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess to God, “just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints.” A thorough study of the book of Isaiah reveals the fact that it is devoted to this trial, setting forth the claims of God as against those of the gods of the heathen. It is pre-eminently the book for the foreign missionary. Let us not a few suggestive passages.*MEDM February 3, 1909, page 89.7*

The forty-first chapter begins with a call for silence in the court-to be still and know that He is God, and then to come near and produce their cause, bringing forth their strong reasons. *Verse 21.* God declares the end from the beginning, and does whatsoever He will; but the idols of men cannot tell even the things that are past, and have no power to do either good or evil.*MEDM February 3, 1909, page 90.1*

Again in the forty-third chapter. When all the nations are assembled, God says to those who stand with His Servant, Christ: “Ye are my witnesses.” A whole “cloud of witnesses” testify to God’s lovingkindness and faithfulness, and His power and willingness to deliver the poor and needy. God leaves His case in the hands of men; those who testify for Him, and change not, will triumph when His character is vindicated before all the worlds; and they who doubt God, and acknowledge His goodness only at the last, when the overwhelming weight of evidence wrings the confession from them, will be punished as false witnesses.*MEDM February 3, 1909, page 90.2*

Now we come to our text. The “reasoning” is merely the deciding on evidence. Nearly all versions, except the English, use a term that accurately expresses the idea of the Hebrew, that of pleading a case in court. “Come, let us go into court together,” God says to

sinful men. They have “gone away backward” (backslidden) from Him, and are “laden with iniquity.” When they would do good evil is present with them, and the adversary makes them believe that they have gone too far to turn back, that God can not pardon such sinners as they, and that He doesn’t care for them. Thus they echo Satan’s charges against God.*MEDM February 3, 1909, page 90.3*

Then God calls for a trial of the cause in court, and rests His cause solely on the fact that He forgives sins “to the uttermost.” “He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.” Herein consists His righteousness. When men say that it is vain to serve God, and that He does not regard His children, He replies that He even “justifieth the ungodly.” When they think that God is so good that He must despise and look with disgust upon people whose sins have covered them from head to foot with “wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores.” He replies that His goodness consists in the forgiveness of sins and in healing the wounds that sin has made.*MEDM February 3, 1909, page 90.4*

Yes, “Jesus saves,” because God is with Him, and He is “God with us.” There is but one God, and He is the Saviour. To this fact He has pledged His existence. He has sworn by Himself that He will forgive our sins, and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. His testimony is in, and sworn to. The existence of the heavens and earth is proof that His word does not fail. Then let every sinner among the heathen “Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever;” and “let the redeemed of the Lord say so.”*MEDM February 3, 1909, page 90.5*

February 17, 1909

“Justification in Condemnation” The Medical Missionary 18, 7.

EJW

E. J. Waggoner

“God is love”; yet ever since the fall of Adam, Satan has had agents at work trying to make men believe that God at best is indifferent to the woes and sorrows of mankind. In spite of the fact that the Spirit of God is love, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, and meekness, children even of Christian parents have grown up afraid of Him. The altogether too prevalent thought, unexpressed and even unformed in direct terms, is that although God may be *willing* to save men, he is not specially anxious; that, instead of seeking to save, he is on the lookout for opportunities to condemn and destroy. When such thoughts of God are held by people who all their lives have heard the *sound* of the Gospel, it is not difficult to conceive how God is regarded by people in the darkness of heathendom. *MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.1*

The worst feature of the case is that the arch enemy of mankind, not content with working on the natural unbelief of the sinful human heart, has presumed to use the Bible to aid his wicked designs, and by perversions of texts and the production of distorted views, to increase doubt and despair. One of the blessed assurances that has been so abused is in *1 John 3:18-21*: *MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.2*

“My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemns us not, then have we confidence toward God.” *MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.3*

A superficial reading of this text has led to the thought that if our heart condemns us, the condemnation of God, who knows all things, must be much greater. There is certainly no comfort in that thought. If it were true, there could be no hope except the false

hope of the Pharisee; for the publican would say, as so many sinners do, "God can never receive and forgive so sinful and unworthy a person as I am." *MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.4*

But what are the facts? Whoever condemns, "it is God that justifieth." For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." Self-condemnation is obviously the acknowledgment of sin committed; and "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." There are many self-condemned sinners, trembling under the thought that they are condemned by God, to whom the servant of Christ is commissioned to say, as did the Master to the palsied man, "Be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." *MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.5*

God, who commands light to shine out of darkness; creates courage from despair; and the fact that our heart condemns us should be to us the assurance that God forgives. This is what is really suggested by the text that we are studying, as plainly appears from the reading of the Revision: "Hereby shall we... assure our heart before him, whereinsoever our heart condemn us; because God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things." Just because he knows all things, he justifies. "By his knowledge shall my righteous Servant justify many," says the Lord. *MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.6*

There is abundance of Scripture in corroboration of this truth. The one hundred and thirty-ninth psalm, one of the most comforting assurances, derives its comfort from the fact that God has searched us and known us; that he understands our thoughts afar off, and is acquainted with all our ways. Because God's Word is "a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart," and "all things are naked and laid open before the eye of Him with whom we have to do," we are urged to "come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy; and find grace to help time of need." *MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.7*

Uninstructed humanity, like Adam and Eve in the Garden, tends to hide itself from God; the thought, "Thou God seest me," is to them terrible; yet from the history of Adam and Eve we know that God

was seeking then to announce to them the Gospel of a Saviour who should destroy sin and Satan. We fly from God until we learn that he fills all things, and then we fly to him, and find escape from God in God. As one with keen perception of the truth has written:*MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.8*

“If there had anywhere appeared in space
Another place of refuge, where to flee,
Our hearts had taken refuge in that place,
And not with Thee.

“But only when we found in earth and air,
In heaven or hell, that such might nowhere be,
That we could not flee from Thee anywhere,
We fled to Thee.”*MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.9*

When our heart, knowing its own plague, condemns us, we appeal from it to the Supreme Court, which sits continually for the sole purpose of justifying the ungodly who flee to it for refuge; and none who appeal to it are ever lost, for “he that believeth is not condemned.” “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*MEDM February 17, 1909, page 136.10*

